

Report of the African-American Student Achievement Committee and Work Groups



South Carolina Department of Education

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State Superintendent of Education**

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Foreword

Every day in school districts and communities across this state, organizations, businesses, community groups, faith groups, government agencies, colleges and universities, and individuals work in harmony with schools to support a common vision for all our children. And today in particular, the effort of South Carolina's citizens is needed to help improve the academic achievement of African-American children.

The report that follows here is a call to action to address the achievement gap and disparities as they relate to the success of African-American children. The data and other statistics presented in this document are the major areas of concern.

We must act deliberately, and with determination, to shape initiatives that will have a positive impact for the State's children. These initiatives must be broad based and must be given the degree of commitment necessary to make them a strong and lasting force.

I commend Vince Ford, chairman of the African-American Student Achievement Committee (AASAC), members of the Committee, and the work groups for giving of their time and expertise to address this issue. The recommendations contained in this document are far-reaching and systemic. This report is only the beginning, however. If *all* our children are to be successful, they will need our assistance.

Inez M. Tenenbaum
State Superintendent of Education

Introduction and Overview

Academic achievement for all students is of fundamental importance to the people of South Carolina. Not only the well-being of citizens but economic growth and prosperity in South Carolina and across this country are contingent upon our having a successful educational system. Developing and maintaining programs and initiatives that will make children successful are major concerns facing all members of every community, including educators, parents, students, community groups, businesses, and the State Department of Education (SDE). In order for all children's needs to be addressed effectively, there must be collaboration among all entities that impact children and families in the crucial ways that are revealed in the 2000 South Carolina Kids Count data report (see appendix A).

The State Superintendent of Education took a leadership role in addressing the problem of low achievement among African-American students by establishing the African-American Student Achievement Committee (AASAC) in May 1999. A wide range of agencies and community leaders throughout the State were represented on the AASAC that initial year. The mission of the State Superintendent was to get children ready for school and keep them at or above grade level to meet higher standards and to mobilize the community in support of these efforts. The tables in appendix B show the major areas of concern.

The AASAC met on numerous occasions and discussed many issues that impact the success of African-American students. After careful consideration and deliberation, members of the AASAC came to a consensus and recommended that work groups be developed to address three priority areas: race, class, and culture; family and community involvement; and teacher and staff quality. The primary objective of the work groups was to research, study, and develop innovative strategies that would close the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students in South Carolina. On the basis of the data and the discussions and concerns of the committee members, the AASAC developed the overall goals and measurable outcomes to be used to determine the effectiveness of the recommendations and strategies.

The SDE will continue to provide the necessary leadership to bring educators, parents, families, communities, legislators, agencies, and businesses together to develop a collaborative effort to address the needs of African-American students. District and school initiatives should be broad-based and flexible and should include the commitment necessary for ongoing impact. Academic excellence for all students must be a systemic process; there is no quick fix. Radical changes must be made to ensure the academic success of *all* students.

The African-American Student Achievement Committee

VISION

- To ensure a world-class system of public education for African-American students while setting high standards and providing support and encouragement for these students to reach high standards.

MISSION

- To get children ready for school and keep them at or above grade level to meet higher standards.
- To mobilize the community in support of these efforts.

The Work Groups

MAIN GOAL

- To research, study, and develop innovative strategies that will close the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students in South Carolina.

The Work Groups

Race, Class, and Culture
Teacher and Staff Quality
Family and Community Involvement

The Cochairs

Reneé Green, Willie Frazier
Jim Price, Thomas Rivers
Jennifer Kahn, Acacia Bamberg

GOALS OF THE INDIVIDUAL GROUPS

Race, Class, and Culture: To identify and address the racial, class, and cultural factors impacting the achievement of African-American students.

Teacher and Staff Quality: To improve the overall effectiveness of teachers and staff in addressing the achievement of African-American students.

Family and Community Involvement: To involve the stakeholders in the academic achievement of all students through the active participation of parents, students, businesses, and the faith community.

Recommendations of the Work Groups

RACE, CLASS, AND CULTURE

1. Collaborate with various groups such as state agencies, school districts, the faith community, and colleges and universities to jointly sponsor an annual conference on closing the achievement gap. The conference topics should include academics, healthy lifestyles, social issues, and effective programs impacting children.
2. Provide professional development training for teachers and administrators on cultural diversity and the achievement gap with regard to African-Americans.
3. Explore and develop nontraditional schools that use innovative teaching strategies to improve the academic success of low achievers.
4. Enroll more African-American students in rigorous courses such as College Prep, honors, Advanced Placement, and Gifted and Talented.
5. Ensure equity funding for schools to include maintaining and improving facilities, upgrading technology, providing equipment for science labs and materials for fine arts, and so forth.
6. Encourage parents and community groups and agencies to become involved and to assist in public education (e.g., health issues, mentoring, tutoring, homework centers, early childhood programs).
7. Encourage families to build character in their children, to assist their children in the exploration of careers and colleges, and to limit the number of hours of television watching at home.
8. Ensure that African-American history and culture are included in the curriculum.
9. Include on the SDE's Web site information related to African-Americans (e.g., effective schools, best practices, research information from groups such as the Education Trust, North Carolina Justice, and the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education [SERVE]).

TEACHER AND STAFF QUALITY

10. Provide leadership and professional development training for teachers, administrators, and support staff.
11. Develop a systemic process for recruiting, retaining, and rewarding teachers.
12. Research and disseminate educational information related to effective teaching practices, disaggregated data on student achievement, successful schools, and so on.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

13. Ensure that every school has a professional parent/family liaison (This corresponds to recommendation 1.5.a in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee*: the district superintendent should “provide staff to serve as parent liaison for the district who will coordinate parent involvement initiatives and coordinate community collaboration and/or agency networking to support parents and families.”)
14. Ensure that parents/families can receive opportunities to foster parental growth.
15. Ensure the establishment of regional family resource centers, with a particular emphasis on rural areas.
16. Increase in each public school the number of support-services personnel such as guidance counselors, social workers, health educators, and nurses.
17. Develop a customer service policy so that African-American parents feel truly welcome in their child’s school.
18. Create better methods of communicating with parents. (This corresponds to recommendation 3.5.a in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: the district superintendent and district administrators should “distribute and display information on parental responsibilities for a child’s academic success in various places where parents are likely to be.”)
19. Ensure that civic organizations, businesses, state agencies, and the faith community recognize the importance of educating school children—with emphasis on African-American children—at their highest levels. (This corresponds to recommendations 3.1.b and 3.1.d in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: making “requests to employers, state agencies, entities, community groups, non-profits, and faith communities that work with children and families to distribute and display parent advice and other pertinent parent information” and encouraging employers to “donate services and goods to schools in the name of both the business and their employees of the month.”)

Strategies and Action Steps Formulated by the Work Groups

RACE, CLASS, AND CULTURE

Goal: To identify and address the racial, class, and cultural factors impacting the achievement of African-American students.

Strategies and Action Steps

- A. Collaborate with various groups such as state agencies, school districts, the faith community, and colleges and universities to jointly sponsor an annual conference on closing the achievement gap. The conference topics should include academics, healthy lifestyles, social issues, and effective programs impacting children.
 - 1. Appoint a conference steering committee.
 - 2. Identify conference participants.
 - 3. Identify conference mission, objectives, and theme.
- B. Provide professional development training for teachers and administrators on cultural diversity and the achievement gap with regard to African-Americans.
 - 1. Establish and staff a statewide learning center of resources.
 - 2. Collaborate with colleges and universities to offer courses and seminars at school sites to address culturally relevant teaching, diversity training, learning styles, and so forth.
 - 3. Encourage districts and schools to establish study groups to research and identify successful practices.
 - 4. Publish annually a catalog to identify conferences, seminars, success stories, reading materials, and so on.
 - 5. Establish a budget for diversity training.
- C. Explore and develop nontraditional schools that use innovative teaching strategies to improve the academic success of low achievers.
 - 1. Provide information regarding the development of special schools.
 - 2. Assist communities and school districts in the process.
- D. Enroll more African-American students in rigorous courses such as College Prep, honors, Advanced Placement, and Gifted and Talented.
 - 1. Make available challenging courses and programs in all schools for all students.
 - 2. Empower principals and counselors to have flexibility for admission to these classes.

3. Ensure that enrollment reflects the makeup of the student population.
 4. Inform minority parents about the advantages of these classes and encourage them to promote their children's placement in them.
- E. Ensure equity funding for schools to include maintaining and improving facilities, upgrading technology, providing equipment for science labs and materials for fine arts, and so forth.
1. Appeal to the legislature for additional funding.
 2. Appeal to school boards to increase funding.
 3. Allow flexibility from funding sources to address critical needs areas.
- F. Encourage parents and community groups and agencies to become involved and to assist in public education (e.g., health issues, mentoring, tutoring, homework centers, early childhood programs).
1. Promote partnerships with businesses and community agencies for education.
 2. Expand mentoring programs.
 3. Develop and maintain a partnership with the faith community.
 4. Develop and maintain a partnership with colleges and universities.
- G. Encourage families to build character in their children, to assist their children in the exploration of careers and colleges, and to limit the number of hours of television watching at home.
1. Ensure that state standards reflect the inclusion of multicultural education.
 2. Include multicultural education in the requirements for teacher certification.
 3. Ensure ongoing professional development in multicultural awareness.
- H. Ensure that African-American history and culture are included in the curriculum.
1. Include multicultural education in all content areas, utilizing such sources as *Education Week*, North Carolina Justice, SERVE, and so on.
 2. Develop a Web site with links to resources related to the achievement gap.
 3. Offer research grants to gather and disseminate information through other organization such as the South Carolina Education Association (SCEA), the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA), School Boards Association, and organizations outside of education.
- I. Include on the SDE's Web site information related to African-Americans (e.g., effective schools, best practices, research information from groups such as the Education Trust, North Carolina Justice, and the SouthEastern Regional Vision for Education [SERVE]).

1. Monitor the coordination of parent and family participation in schools and districts.
2. Develop an advisory committee to address cultural diversity in schools and districts.

TEACHER AND STAFF QUALITY

Goal: To improve the overall effectiveness of teachers and staff in addressing the achievement of African-American students.

Strategies and Action Steps

- I. Provide leadership and professional development training for teachers, administrators, and support staff.
 - A. Ensure the existence of and provide support for district-level induction programs for first-year teachers and new teachers from out of state.
 1. Monitor induction programs and ensure that within the training are components that address the strategies or best practices on teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
 2. Include in the teacher induction programs those teachers from out of state who have five or fewer years of experience.
 - B. Provide extensive professional development courses for teachers, support personnel, and administrators at the building and district level. Ensure that teachers are qualified and certified to teach the South Carolina curriculum standards in English/language arts, math, science, and social studies.
 1. Examine what is currently being provided and ensure that it has components that address the strategies or best practices on teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
 2. Continue to make districts aware of the training opportunities available.
 3. Expand the course offerings, as resources become available, to include those areas that are currently in need.
 4. Allow graduate or recertification credit to be awarded for most, if not all, professional development courses offered.
 5. Establish incentives for educators to take professional development courses.
 - C. Ensure that the Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating the Professional Teaching (ADEPT) process addresses the needs specific to teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
 1. Review the ADEPT process and identify those portions that deal with issues associated with teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
 2. Make the findings of the review process part of the ADEPT training/orientation.

3. Have ADEPT evaluators address in their summaries the issues involved in the teaching of culturally diverse students.
- D. Provide resources and require districts to allot time within the work schedule for teachers to engage in reflective activities. Such activities include school-based research, collaborative planning, and quality work initiatives.
1. Encourage schools to create activities that develop a learning community in which culturally diverse backgrounds are addressed.
 2. Allocate additional funding to districts so that they can implement a planning period within the workday for every teacher every day.
 3. District- and school-level professional development plans must include opportunities for teachers to engage in reflective activities.
 4. Recognize that individual teachers and schools have different staff development needs.
- E. Put in place a standardized annual evaluation instrument that measures teachers' effectiveness in working with students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
1. Develop and implement an action plan to bring up to standard the performance of any teacher whose work is below standard.
 2. Review all current evaluation systems and instruments to ensure that proper emphasis is placed on teacher effectiveness in working with students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
 - a. Teachers and administrators should use data from currently administered standardized exams such as the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) to measure student progress, compare the progress of culturally diverse students (i.e., African-American) with that of majority students (i.e., Caucasian) on those exams.
 - b. The test data should be used in-house and should be disaggregated for each teacher and for subgroups within that teacher's classes.
 - c. The strategies of teachers who are effective in reaching culturally diverse students should be used as examples to help less successful teachers develop stronger techniques.
- II. Develop a systemic process for recruiting, retaining, and rewarding teachers.
- A. Collaborate with the business community, civic organizations, and religious organizations to increase the pool of eligible teachers and to recruit the best teachers possible.
1. Develop ties with the business community to encourage the development of programs that support education careers and efforts, such as Clemson University's Call Me

“Mister” program and Time Warner Cable’s Star Teacher Award and student awards programs.

2. Encourage advertisements that value education and educators.
3. Use ties to the business community, civic organizations, and religious organizations to identify and recruit eligible teachers.
4. Encourage the State to provide salary supplement incentives for teachers who teach in predominantly culturally diverse or rural communities.

B. Develop a career ladder program for teachers.

1. Look internally for work recognition opportunities, such as a tier program that has desirable titles and monetary rewards. Such programs should produce a tier of teachers based on seniority, effectiveness, and accomplishments.
2. Establish appropriate titles and salary adjustments for teachers in the tier program.

C. Require a two-year induction process for new teachers

Increase the induction process to two years with added emphasis on teaching a culturally diverse student population.

D. Be assertive and proactive in identifying ineffective teachers.

1. Develop or use a current statewide instrument to evaluate teachers and to determine their teaching effectiveness in general and their effectiveness in teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds in particular.
2. Provide ineffective teachers with ongoing support and, if necessary, terminate them.
3. Restructure the present teacher employment/dismissal law to ensure that teacher competency as a consideration for continued employment is addressed.

III. Research and disseminate educational information on effective teaching practices, disaggregated data on student achievement, information on successful schools, and so on.

A. Make student achievement a part of the teacher evaluation process.

1. Provide the school district and the individual schools with the PACT test results by August 1 of each year.
2. Provide a support system to allow teachers to understand and appropriately use PACT test results.
3. Provide the leadership that will allow each district to develop a process for including student achievement as a part of its teacher evaluation system.

B. Develop correlates of school and classroom factors that are proven to contribute to a failing learning environment.

1. Assemble the best educational minds in the State to identify those factors that are not part of a strong learning environment.
 2. Discuss the correlates with teachers, principals, politicians, parents, civic, leaders, students, and higher education faculty and administrators.
- C. Disseminate research-based best practices for teaching English/reading/language arts, math, science, social studies and for instructing students from culturally diverse backgrounds.
1. Hold an education summit for the purpose of sharing best practices.
 2. Give teachers and staff members an opportunity to visit and research schools with large culturally diverse populations that have a proven record of success.
- D. Evaluate the effectiveness of the recommendations made by the Teacher and Staff Quality Work Group.

After a three-year implementation of the recommendations, the Teacher and Staff Work Group or the African-American Student Achievement Committee should evaluate the progress of school districts in closing the achievement gap.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Goal: To involve the stakeholders in the academic achievement of all students through active participation of parents, students, businesses and the faith community.

Strategies and Action Steps

- A. Ensure that every school has a professional parent/family liaison (This corresponds to recommendation 1.5.a in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: the district superintendent should “provide staff to serve as parent liaison for the district who will coordinate parent involvement initiatives and coordinate community collaboration and/or agency networking to support parents and families.”)
 1. A parent/family liaison should be present in elementary, middle, high, and alternative schools. The liaison should have specific training and demonstrated ability in community and coalition building, family dynamics, interpersonal communication, and African-American culture. State funding should be available to implement this initiative.
 2. The parent/family liaison would be responsible for ensuring that parents/families are invested in and informed about their children’s education. The effectiveness of the liaison would be evaluated using measurable objectives as determined by the school. (This corresponds to recommendation 5.3.a in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: “Survey parents annually to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parent involvement.”) The liaison would also be expected to visit families’ homes when necessary.

3. In cases where it is not feasible for each school to have a liaison, a faculty member should be the family-involvement contact person and should work with a district-level liaison. (This corresponds to recommendation 1.5.b in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: the district superintendent should “require each school to designate a faculty contact for parent involvement efforts who will work collaboratively with the district coordinator and network with other school faculty contacts”).
4. The parent/family liaison should be part of a student support-services team composed of a guidance counselor, a social worker, a nurse, a school resource officer, and any other professional the school deems appropriate. The parent/family liaison should work with community organizations, faith groups, and businesses to develop more programs to assist children.

B. Ensure that parents/families can receive opportunities to foster parental growth.

Schools should provide opportunities for parental growth such as parenting courses. (This corresponds to recommendation 3.4.d in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: school boards of trustees should “offer parent education, parenting skills, and child development information in comprehensive health courses at middle and high school grades to promote and influence good parenting, particularly, for students who are young parents.”)

C. Ensure the establishment of regional family resource centers, with a particular emphasis on rural areas.

Family resource centers should provide students one-on-one assistance with their schoolwork and should be a place where families can learn how to help their children with their schoolwork. Such centers should also offer families access to computers and the Internet, parent education courses, and job training. The resource center could also be a meeting place for parental-community organizations and a place where school officials post information about these events.

D. Increase the number of student support-services personnel in each public school such as guidance counselors, social workers, health educators, and nurses.

Enough counselors and nurses should exist to care adequately for the number of students in the school. These personnel should assist students in obtaining the proper care they need (e.g., health care, clothing).

E. Develop a customer service policy so that African-American parents feel truly welcome in their child’s school.

1. Teachers, administrators, and support staff at each school should be trained in customer service. This skill will help them develop a positive school climate and a “family friendly” atmosphere.
2. Districts should conduct a “communications audit” to analyze the various methods of communication that schools have used to contact parents.

3. Schools can also develop a “good note” policy, a “student of the month” award, or a “parent of the month” award to promote positive interactions among the students, families, and schools.
- F. Create better methods of communicating with parents. (This corresponds to recommendation 3.5.a in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: the district superintendent and district administrators “should distribute and display information on parental responsibilities for a child’s academic success in various places where parents are likely to be.”)
- Districts should develop a plan that the schools can implement to communicate with families about upcoming events, report cards, meetings, and so on. Schools must use a variety of ways—such as half-time at sporting events—to reach parents/families and disseminate information to them.
- G. Ensure that civic organizations, businesses, state agencies, and the faith community recognize the importance of educating school children—with emphasis on African-American children—at their highest levels. (This corresponds to recommendations 3.1.b and 3.1.d in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: making “requests to employers, state agencies, entities, community groups, non-profits, and faith communities that work with children and families to distribute and display parent advice and other pertinent parent information” and encouraging employers to “donate services and goods to schools in the name of both the business and their employees of the month.”)
1. District superintendents should seek community support by meeting with the leaders of civic, religious, and business organizations. Local school systems should work to demonstrate to these organizations the importance of their involvement in public education. Community organizations can demonstrate their support for schools by contributing resources such as space, volunteers, and tutors and by adopting a school. Businesses should review policies related to family involvement in schools and make any adjustments so that the workplace is a “family friendly” environment.
 2. Successful role models in the business community should be routinely invited into schools to share with students exactly what skills they will need to be employed by a particular company. Members of community groups, businesses, and the faith community should be encouraged to attend PTA and PTO meetings and to become members of school improvement councils. (This corresponds to recommendation 1.5.b in the *Parent Involvement Task Force: Report and Recommendations*: the district superintendent and the school principal should “support implementation of Action Team approaches and other models that support SICs and facilitate greater decision-making input and collaboration among parents, the community and faculty in the school.”)
- H. Develop a clearinghouse of model programs that demonstrate best practices of family and community involvement around the State as well as throughout the nation. A Web site can also be created that would provide insight into how to establish these types of programs, with links to sources of funding and organizations that could provide technical assistance.

Desired Outcomes

The effectiveness of the strategies and action steps in closing the achievement gap between African-American and nonminority students will be measured by the desired outcomes. **Note: African-Americans make up 40 percent of the total student population in South Carolina.**

- A. Increase the number of African-American students who excel in school and on state-mandated tests.
 - CSAB results: in 1996–98, an average of 71 percent of African-American students met the standard, compared to 86 percent of Caucasian students. (See table 6, appendix B.)
 - PACT results: in 1999, 52 percent of African-American students in grades three through eight scored below basic, compared to 22 percent of Caucasian students. (See table 7, appendix B.)
 - SAT results: in 1997–99, the average score for African-American students was 822, compared to 1011 for Caucasian students. (See item J, below, and table 10, appendix B.)
- B. Increase the number of students who receive LIFE Scholarships. (See table 11, appendix B.)
 - In 1998 and 1999, African-American students received an average of 797 scholarships compared to 6,278 for Caucasian students. Students must have a B average and at least 1050 on the SAT to obtain the LIFE Scholarship in South Carolina.

Note: On September 11, 2000, in the state of California, legislation was signed to make college accessible to all students; a student who graduates from high school with a C average will get financial assistance to attend college. In the state of Georgia, the HOPE Scholarship began in 1993: high school graduates with a B average receive full tuition to state colleges and universities.
- C. Increase the number of training sessions for teachers and staff to address cultural issues and the unique needs of African-American students.
- D. Develop a Web site that addresses educational issues that positively impact African-American students.
- E. Increase parent and community involvement in schools
- F. Decrease the suspension and expulsion rate of African-American students.
 - Almost 60 percent of the 3,640 students in alternative schools are African-Americans; most of them are male.
 - In 1997–98 and 1998–99, African-Americans were reported as committing almost 65 percent of the 18,803 most serious crimes in schools.
 - In South Carolina, it costs an average of \$5,500 to educate a child in the public schools, as compared to \$40,000 to house them at the Department of Juvenile Justice and \$15,000

to incarcerate them in one of the state correctional institutions. It would be more cost efficient to take a proactive approach and properly educate all citizens.

G. Increase the graduation rate of African-American students. (See table 9, appendix B.)

- In 1999 and 2000, an average of 67.4 percent African-American students met the standard on all three of the Exit Examination subtests (reading, mathematics, and writing) on the first attempt, compared to 90.1 percent of Caucasian students. Students have four attempts to pass the Exit Examination, beginning in the spring of their tenth-grade year.
- All students must have earned twenty-four required units to graduate.

H. Increase the number of African-American teachers, especially males, in South Carolina's public schools. (See table 3, appendix B.)

- In 1997–99, there was an average of 6,683 (16 percent) African-American teachers, compared to an average of 32,798 (77 percent) Caucasian teachers.

I. Increase the number of African-American students enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program. (See table 4, appendix B.)

- In 1996–99, an average of 8,218 (15 percent) African-American students were enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program, compared to an average of 45,632 (83 percent) Caucasian students.
- In 1998, the State Board of Education approved new regulations that should help increase enrollment.

J. Increase the number of African-American students enrolled in rigorous courses such as College Prep and Advanced Placement. (See tables 4 and 8, appendix B.)

K. Decrease the number of African-American students being placed in special education. (See table 5, appendix B.)

- In 1998, there were 99,042 African-American students in special education in South Carolina; in 1999, there were 103,153. In those two years, African-Americans made up almost 50 percent of the total population of students being served in special education in the State.
- Of the African-Americans in this 50 percent, 33 percent were male.

Conclusion

Members of the work groups believe that the strategies presented in this report should be implemented as quickly as possible. We think it is imperative to spearhead a concerted effort to address closing the achievement gap. The three areas studied—race, class, and culture; family and community involvement; and teacher and staff quality—constitute critical components for the success of African-American students.

The work groups did research and studied many programs and initiatives, both in this state and across the country. We support the early childhood development program, the First Steps initiative, and the recommendations in the report from the South Carolina Middle Grades Task Force and the Governor's Commission on Teacher Quality. We recognize the importance of eliminating the achievement gap among minorities as do many educators, business leaders, legislators, clergy, and citizens in South Carolina.

In addition, schools and districts must regularly use disaggregated data to raise awareness, to improve efficiency, to develop programs, and to implement initiatives that will positively impact student achievement. A partnership must be developed and maintained with parents, faith groups, businesses, legislators, and the community to improve the educational system. Local and state agencies that assist families and schools must collaborate regularly and work collectively to develop common missions to address problem areas.

Administrators, teachers, and staff members must be held accountable for their students' achievement, but they must also be afforded flexibility in implementing programs and initiatives that work. The programs and initiatives must be systemic and based on research and best practices. An advisory committee in each school and district could assist in providing feedback and in monitoring activities for minority students. This advisory committee could be valuable in addressing issues prior to the school's receiving its annual report card grade, as mandated by the Education Accountability Act of 1998.

It is hoped that the schools, districts, and communities are willing to take on the challenging task of making sure that all children, including African-Americans, reach their full academic potential. Since students reach their potential at varying rate, academic plans must be individualized. As we address students' educational needs, we will eventually decrease the poverty level of families and improve the economic growth of this state. When a great many individuals or group of people do not develop their academic talents fully, our society is much poorer for their lack of educational advancement.

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RACE, CLASS, AND CULTURE

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Appendix A

The South Carolina Kids Count Data Report for the Year 2000

Provided here is information from the Kids Count data report regarding circumstances and conditions that are impacting the academic achievement of South Carolina's children in the year 2000. (Note: In the computations of percentages given in the report, African-Americans are combined with what the report refers to as "other races." The South Carolina Kids Count report for 2000 is available on-line at <<http://167.7.127.236/kc00/kcs00.html>>.)

Economic Status. Low income makes it difficult for many families to provide the material and environmental enrichment necessary for healthy child development. In 1989, over 21 percent of all South Carolina children and youth lived below the poverty level, 9.5 percent of Caucasians and 38.9 percent of African-Americans and other races. Many struggling schools have a high percentage of students on free/reduced lunch.

Single-Parent Family. Single-parent families are the most likely to be poor. In 1989, 50 percent of children in single-parent families lived in poverty, but only 9.3 percent of children in married-couple families were poor. In 1990, 14.5 percent of Caucasian children and 44.6 percent of African-American and other non-Caucasian children lived in single-parent families.

Births to Mothers Not Completing High School. Children's success is strongly influenced by the educational level of their parents. In 1997, 18.5 percent of Caucasians and 25.8 percent of African-Americans and other non-Caucasian babies were born to mothers who had completed less than the twelfth grade.

Health. Good health during the formative years helps children to reach their maximum potential. Children's health not only reflects the well-being of the community but also determines how adequately the children will perform in school.

Early and continuous prenatal care can make a significant difference in ensuring the birth of healthy babies. Of the pregnant women in 1997, 20.1 percent of Caucasians and 39.3 percent of African-Americans and other races received less than adequate prenatal care. In that same year, 738 women received no prenatal care at all. If this situation continues from year to year, a great many children's lives will be adversely affected.

Comment: Additional health issues that can have an impact on children are low birth weight, poor immunization, unhealthy lifestyles, and inadequate health care. Educating families and children will help improve the lives of all of South Carolina's citizens.

Appendix B

South Carolina Public Schools Data

Table 1

Student Enrollment in South Carolina Schools by Ethnicity, 1998–99

| | Males | Females | Total Number | Percentage of Total Enrollment |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| African-American | 142,684 | 138,981 | 281,665 | 42.2% |
| Caucasian | 191,599 | 179,651 | 371,250 | 55.6% |
| Other | 8,379 | 8,048 | 16,427 | 2.2% |
| Total enrollment | 342,662 | 326,680 | 669,342 | 100.0% |

Table 2

South Carolina Teachers by Gender, Fall 1999

| Gender | Number | Percentage of Total Teachers |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Male | 7,177 | 16.1% |
| Female | 36,057 | 81.1% |
| Not reported | 3,436 | 7.7% |

Table 3

South Carolina Teachers by Ethnicity, Fall 1999

| Ethnicity | Number | Percentage of Total Teachers |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| African-American | 6,985 | 15.7% |
| Caucasian | 33,768 | 76.0% |
| Other | 260 | 0.6% |
| Not reported | 1,215 | 2.7% |

Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)

Table 4

South Carolina Students Enrolled in State-Funded Gifted and Talented Programs, 1996–99

In 1998, the State Board of Education approved new regulations for GATE.

| Year | Total Students | Caucasians | African-Americans |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1996–97 | 56,542 | 47,215 | 8,035 |
| 1997–98 | 57,629 | 47,630 | 8,377 |
| 1998–99 | 51,378 | 41,826 | 8,241 |

Special Education

Table 5

South Carolina Students Identified with Disabilities, 1996–99

| Year | Total Students | Caucasians | African-Americans |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1996 | 93,417 | 46,419 | 46,076 |
| 1997 | 97,430 | 48,630 | 47,765 |
| 1998 | 99,042 | 49,090 | 48,909 |
| 1999 | 103,153 | 51,394 | 50,408 |

Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (CSAB)

Table 6

Percentage of South Carolina Students Meeting Standard on the CSAB, 1996–2000

The CSAB measures student readiness to begin the first grade school curriculum.

| Year | Total Students | Caucasians | African-Americans |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1996 | 75.8 | 84.0 | 65.9 |
| 1997 | 79.6 | 86.5 | 71.7 |
| 1998 | 81.2 | 87.7 | 74.1 |
| 1999 | 83.9 | 89.8 | 77.4 |
| 2000 | 85.2 | 90.7 | 79.6 |

Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT)

This test battery was administered for the first time in the spring of 1999 to replace the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), which had been used for twenty years. The PACT is administered to students in grades three through eight.. Note: According to economic status, an average of *over 70 percent* of the students tested who were on free/reduced lunch scored at basic or below basic.

Table 7
Percentage of South Carolina Students
Scoring at and below Basic on the 1999 PACT

| | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| African-Americans | 87% | 86% | 89% | 86% | 91% | 92% |
| Caucasians | 61% | 61% | 63% | 59% | 66% | 69% |

Advanced Placement (AP) Examination

Table 8
Percentage of South Carolina Students
Passing the AP Exam, 1994–99

| Year | Total Number of Students Taking Exam | Total Number of Caucasians Taking Exam | Percentage of Caucasians Passing | Total Number of African-Americans Taking Exam | Percentage of African-Americans Passing |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1994–95 | 13,124 | 9,826 | 54.5% | 1,800 | 21.1% |
| 1995–96 | 13,895 | 10,298 | 55.4% | 2,049 | 23.6% |
| 1996–97 | 14,169 | 10,581 | 58.3% | 1,909 | 22.5% |
| 1997–98 | 14,921 | 11,154 | 59.8% | 2,030 | 21.0% |
| 1998–99 | 14,975 | 11,187 | 59.6% | 2,032 | 24.9% |

High School Exit Examination

The State's Exit Examination is first administered to students in the spring of their tenth-grade year. Students have four opportunities, if necessary, to pass all sections of the examination. The three subtest areas are reading, mathematics, and writing. The current Exit Examination is scheduled to be replaced by the PACT Exit Examination in the year 2003.

Table 9
Percentage of South Carolina Students Meeting Standard on the
High School Exit Examination on the First Attempt, 1998–2000

| Year | Group | Reading | Mathematics | Writing |
|------|-------------------|---------|-------------|---------|
| 1998 | All students | 81.5% | 75.1% | 83.8% |
| | Caucasians | 89.9% | 85.3% | 92.5% |
| | African-Americans | 68.6% | 59.1% | 70.8% |
| 1999 | All students | 81.9% | 76.1% | 83.8% |
| | Caucasians | 89.9% | 86.1% | 91.3% |
| | African-Americans | 69.7% | 60.4% | 69.7% |
| 2000 | All students | 82.7% | 77.3% | 86.6% |
| | Caucasians | 90.9% | 87.8% | 94.5% |
| | African-Americans | 69.8% | 60.4% | 74.3% |

Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)

The SAT is used in twenty-three states and the District of Columbia as a college admissions test. The percentage of seniors who elect to take the SAT ranges from a low 49 percent to a high of 80 percent. The participation rate in South Carolina has averaged 60 percent in the last three years. Also, from 1996 to 1999, South Carolina only had an average of 33 percent of students taking the SAT who expected to take twenty or more challenging academic credits as recommended by the College Board, whereas the national average was 46 percent of students.

Table 10
Average Composite (Verbal and Math) SAT Scores, 1996–2000

| Year | All Students in S.C. | Caucasians | African-Americans | All Students in the U.S. | South Carolina Students Completing Twenty or More Academic Courses | |
|------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | | All Students | African-Americans |
| 1996 | 954 | 1008 | 831 | 1013 | 1045 | 776 |
| 1997 | 953 | 1010 | 822 | 1016 | 1049 | N/A |
| 1998 | 951 | 1010 | 821 | 1017 | 1045 | 892 |
| 1999 | 954 | 1013 | 822 | 1016 | 1048 | 901 |
| 2000 | 966 | 1022 | 833 | 1019 | 1054 | 910 |

LIFE Scholarship

Table 11

Number of Students Meeting Requirements for the LIFE Scholarship, 1998–2000

The SAT minimum score requirement for 1998–99 was 1000; for the year 2000, it was and 1050.

| Year | Total Students | Caucasians | African-Americans |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1998 | 7,865 | 6,234 | 763 |
| 1999 | 8,112 | 6,321 | 831 |
| 2000 | 6,518 | 5,015 | 546 |